

P O E M S

Part

KEGAN PA

Poetry

P O E M S

BY

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LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1887

LINES TO
GOOD NIGHT
SEATS ...
ALONE
DE PROFUNDIS
TO A WINTER
AT SEA
FORN
NAME ...
HOME
ORYDON A
VERMORE
SLEEPING
O A BLIND
HOPE ...
HE LAST S
HE PAINTER
HE POET
OVE'S DREAM
HE AFTER-

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LINES TO MY MOTHER.

MOTHER, these violet songs of early youth
I scatter on thy grave ; and though thine eyes
Of love cannot behold my votive hands,
And though thou canst not hear my wandering feet
Upon the sward, to-night I dedicate
Youth's tuneful Spring to song at thy dear grave.
From thy warm veins I caught the purple drops
Of life ; on the white music of thy breast
I drank the dream-white draughts of poetry—
Drank deep the love and gloom that never die.
Nature's white-handed wand is full of dreams ;
Of all, this is the most poetic touch,
The baby arms about the mother's neck—
Sweet picture Nature ever loves to paint,
And ever paints in heaven-haunted homes !
What is a baby's face with wistful eyes ?

The hand of God on woman's faithful heart,
A fair-cheeked star for which to live and die,
The tender blossom of sweet first-love's Spring.
On youth's high golden stair we longing wait
Till lily hands of love lead downward o'er
Melodious steps, and at the end we turn
To see a mother's smiles fading behind,
To hear her memory-treasured footsteps die.
Then, with a sigh, we climb the breathless steps
Of time. Mother, had I but loved as thou
Didst love, I had *not* this regret and pain,
Now, as I read thy life in the *sad* light
Of after years ! Forgive thine erring son !
The years, the lonely years, of thought unfold
The *sadness* of thy lot, and *thy* deep gloom
They bring to me. When childhood life is gone,
And waking memory finds the past a dream,
Ears weary of life's haunting moan, Sorrow's
Inexorable step, urn-filling Time
That brings Beauty's sad smile and pensive brow
Eyes weary of neglected dreams upon
A painted stage, that roam from night to night,

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Care-crowned, and gaze in purple bubbling bowls,
 Drinking brief draughts of sad forgetfulness.
 How soon we find that dreams fulfilled, but prove
 Their nothingness ; that wealth is but a heap
 Of yellow gold, and fame the loud-mouthed praise
 Of thoughtless crowds, a painted picture hawked
 About the streets ! The mind doth feed the heart ;
 And if the mind be starved, how little is
 The life ! Thank God, the lowliest man can be
 An uncrowned monarch in the world of thought !
 What is a tinselled king with crown of gold ?
 What are wide lands and castellated lawns ?
 Uncertain as a faithless woman's love,
 They are the prey of change and crumbling time.
 How different is thy domain, fair Thought !
 Thine is the wand of immortality.
 Thy smile hath alchemy to change all things
 To gold, and thine imperial eye doth bid
 The dying flower blossom again for ever.
 Thou canst make sweetest music out of stones,
 And thread the mazes of the silver stars.
 Upon the canvas of dumb space, with Time's

Swift brush thou paint'st imperishable things,
History's large page, writ with the lives of men
Whose hands, inspired by thee, did raise on high
Freedom's dear flag, never to droop again.
Without our Hampdens, Cromwells, Miltons, we
Were slaves bound hand and foot to tyranny.
True greatness is the struggle to be free,
And he who would be truly great must bear
A thorny heart for lovely Freedom's sake.
Ignominy and gloom, curses, blind lies,
The scorn of little minds, the bitter hemlock bowl
Are all he wins in life. Hail, noble queen,
Thy reign is growing larger every hour!
Hail to the light of thine eternal brow!
The little lights must fade in thee as moths
Dissolve in flame—the little lights must die.
Is it a sin to doubt the past, that speaks
The darkened mind? Hail, light unquenchable
From thee Priestcraft and Superstition skulk
Into oblivion, and caves of night,
And mumbling mouths that mourn the outworn
The rights and lives of men are but half built.

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When inhumanity hath greater power
 Than Love, what wonder that the world is full
 Of clanking chains, and rayless cells of gloom !
 Man makes religion, not religion man,
 And those who mark th' unseen, with rule and line,
 Perish Narcissus-like, with selfish heart
 And little creed, nor feel beauty's deep smile
 Nor earth's sublimity. Hail, mind divine,
 Whence noblest thoughts are born ! inspire our hearts
 With greater love for nature and for man ;
 Nature, that only book infallible, pregnant
 With love and truth for those who long to taste.
 Who hath an eye to love the stars, needs not
 A candle's light to lead him unto heaven.
 Who loves one little flower with deep delight,
 Needs not a painted window nor a cross
 To bind his soul unto the Infinite.
 And thou, long-struggling man, the Future hath
 A generous light for thee, long trodden down
 At Mammon's weary shrine by heartless feet.
 The Past hath laid a heavy load upon
 Thy back, begrimed thy noble brow and hands,

Leaving thy mind to struggle in the gloom,
Thou hast cried out for food, and heedless hands
Have built high-painted vaults and marble walls,
Where rich-robed figures move in scented smoke,
For thee to gaze upon and die in vice
And misery. What are these gods who dare
To brand their brothers' brow with unbelief
Because they will not bow to idle forms
And idle tales born of a dying past ?
Who gives his life to love and truth lives not
A faithless life, despite the wagging tongues
Of fools ; who will not take the light of truth,
Nor grow, must cling unto the glimmering lamp
Of self-made gloom ; who loves not freedom loves
Not man ; who fears to follow truth where'er
She leads, is but a slave tricked by his birth.
I have loved Freedom from my birth, and I
Would ever love, despite all scorn, the lure
Of luxury, pride, wealth, and vanity.
My youth hath taught me love for humble men.
How fair those brows weary with honest toil,
Those arms brown with the sun of harvest days,

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Those homes that lie like silver sails afar
 In silver peace upon an emerald sea !
 Calm are their lives, their voices sweet and pure
 As tinkling streams in flower-haunted dells.
 Their warm hearts have no sting, but lamb-white thoughts
 That lie beneath the elms of memory ;
 And these are of their fathers, like their homes,
 Inherited and sacred as their graves.
 It were a noble thought to consecrate
 A life to them, that each blank mind might learn
 That every footstep hath a harmony
 Of sweetest thoughts, each flower a noble poem,
 Each stream and bird a lovely thought to wake
 The loftiest dreams. Wake not the rustic from
 His dream of Heaven ; until the mind is ripe
 It needs such light. Take not his village rhymes,
 The sweet church-bells of youth and love and death.
 They have a power o'er him thou mayst not give,
 Take not this music from his footsteps, lest
 He fall. Unless thou give the larger mind,
 Break not his dream ! In Nature's lonely paths
 The thinker learns deep sympathy with man,

Here every flower is a sad thought of him,
For they are ever clad in a sweet bloom ;
But man, the noblest star of all earth's flowers,
Too oft is hunger-wan and clad in rags.
God help thee in the struggle to be free !
Mother, if in these man-made shadows I
Could find no rest, and have been sadder than
I should, forgive ; henceforth I build a life
On love, not fear. Death is no venom'd snake ;
'Tis but to sleep again in thy dear arms.
If I have dwelt too long with sorrow since
I gazed upon thy face for the last time,
Forgive the past. Let thy sweet memory
Inspire my life to deeds ; my soul doth crave
Action. Action is the soul's finest speech ;
Words may deceive, deeds never can. I would
Do more than live a shadow-haunted life,
A pensive poet by the dreaming sea.
'Tis sweet to watch the moon, with lily face
Beneath a silver-saffron veil, dreaming
Of her first love, the russet blush of trees
In last wild dalliance with the autumn winds,

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The mirth of twinkling birds in golden air,
 And calm of ivied ruins in dim night ;
 But this large struggling world hath need of Youth's
 Enthusiasm, passion, high action, deep
 Conviction, honest toil, the glowing dawn
 Of noblest thoughts, green hopes, warm love, and faith,
 Ambitions, aspirations, all that make
 The splendid setting of a noble life.
 And if I cannot enter where I long
 To go, let me breathe thoughts for noble action.
 Life is a pallid student at his books
 Who falls asleep beside the midnight lamp,
 The broken column of Youth's high-built dream,
 A silver wave in ever-changing tides
 Of restless time, and yet the weakest life
 Is not in vain if spent for mankind's good.
 Though life be brief, 'tis long enough for all
 To do some noble work. We do not live
 For Time and Space ; but they for us, to serve
 Each noble thought. We only live in Thought's
 No animation, not in votive tablet,
 Or dust-stained urn, nor in the sculptured niche

On shadow-haunted walls of lofty gloom.
Time is the reverent gaze on marble eyes,
The pilgrim's fading feet on marble ears.
Time is our slave ; in Death we still can stir
The veins of those we love to noble thoughts.
Death is the power of life without the pain.
Mock not the poet's dreams ; the poet sings
The Golden Age. It is his hapless lot
To suffer scorn in youth ; mock not his dreams,
Lest in clear depths thou dost but mock thy shadow
Our highest thoughts are but poetic dreams,
Therefore the poet hath his brothers' love,
Flushed gleaners in the yellow fields of hope,
Beside the bell-sweet waves of memory,
That ever chime—We are not what we thought
We were ; we are not what we hoped to be.
Who climbs Thought's mount is ever climbing toward
The gloom ; the larger vision hath unrest,
And Resignation is the only path
To death for poets and philosophers,
The consolation of a generous heart,
The noble freedom of a faithful mind.

GOOD NIGHT.

How calmly, love, the day hath fled !

How soon the sun sinks down to rest !

See how yon quivering orb doth shed

His myriad gems about the west !

And gold and rainbow-tinted shells

That fade so sweetly and are gone.

Amid the music of far bells,

The starry night steals softly on.

The full red moon hangs o'er the pine,

The fields are veiled in misty shrouds,

The first pale star begins to shine

In beauty o'er the sapphire clouds.

Fair night, how thou dost soothe the heart
With sleep and dreams and calm delight :
Give me thine hand ere I depart,
Give me thine hand, my love, good night !

What happy hours I've spent with thee !
Too soon hath vanished this brief day,
Still do I wait and lingeringly
Like unto it must pass away.
Soon youth must pass, that bloometh fair,
And sadder light into thine eye
Must steal, and gray into thine hair,
And to thine heart the troubled sigh.

Thy lovely face is pure and glad,
And tender dreams thine heart-strings thrill ;
No bitter grief hath made thee sad,
Nor yearning wish thy soul doth fill
That only life and love were sure
As death, and souls could never part ;
From sin and shame, and thought impure,
God ever keep thee as thou art !

Sweeter than setting suns and bars
 Of golden cloud and mellow moon
And silvery sheen of twinkling stars,
 Sweeter than thoughts of faded June,
Knowing that thou art in the fold
 Of innocence, and wolfish blight
Is far removed from thee, to hold
 Thy lily hand and say, "Good night!"

KEATS.

IMMORTAL exile from the Grecian shore,
Thou who didst lay thine heart at Nature's shrine,
Breathing a noble praise in song divine,
Making melodious rhymes that sweetly pour
Enchantment like the Lesbian isle of yore
And dreams of dryads, amber honey, wine,
And flowery wreaths the white-limbed nymphs did twine
These sadly thou didst leave, and sing no more.

In crumbling Rome, beneath Italian skies,
Where memories of Virgil haunt the spot,
Thou sleep'st alone, and Time's great ruin lies
About thy grave. Young dreamer, who once sought
Parnassian heights and bore a precious prize,
Thy golden reed of promise lies forgot !

ALONE.

THE fire flits on the walls
And glitters on the pane :
Lo, Memory recalls
The happy past again.
I sit alone.

A tender dreamful light
O'ercasts the fading green ;
Amid the leaves' sad flight
And Autumn's golden sheen,
I roam alone.

Alas, the wild winds sweep
O'er Winter's bosom white,
Like moans of restless sleep,
Or hollow sounds of night.
I sigh alone.

The hyacinth doth peep
And spring-time lilies bloom
O'er dearest ones asleep
Within the dreamless tomb.
I weep alone.

The distant church-bell sounds
O'er fragrant meadows broad
And silent sleepers' mounds ;
All pass to worship God—
I walk alone.

Soft doth the music steal
Out o'er the flowering sod ;
No grief these sleepers feel
For evermore. O God,
I am alone !

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DE PROFUNDIS.

THE moon sinks down her solitary way,
Her silver bar wanes to the shore,
And there is lost upon the level sand ;
The sea is ebbing out, out and away.
Afar the mazy mists of silver soar,
Flame-winged, in an eternal flight, so grand
Beyond the largest vision of this little earth.
The day is dead. Dear silent day,
What have I done in thy winged hours that's worth
One noble thought ? Along the shore the shadows creep
And die ; this heart is sad with every sun
That sets. What can life's pleasures ever be
When dearest friends are still and deep asleep ?
What work in life ? What love when it is done ?
A grain of sand, O melancholy sea !

Why do I wander on the beach ?
The world doth sleep. Why hold this pallid hand
Upon a heart that beats in doubt and pain ?
Fain would I press my aching brow
In the cold sand,
And with hot palms convulsive reach
For ooze and spray-wet weeds cast from the main.
I suffer now
As did dead worlds in ages long ago,
And souls that peopled many a fabled land—
All felt the heart-ache, fear and woe,
And dreary thoughts of a strange destiny ;
Nor sleep, nor opiate draughts, nor wine's sweet flow
Can soothe such grief, O melancholy sea !

Moan on, moan on ! I hear another song
Than thine,—a song that floated o'er thy breast
How oft in vanished years ! It floats again
Unto mine ear. I hear the wondrous lyre
Of the blind bard, and see the Grecian throng
About Troy's lofty walls, and Hector slain,
The white-stained face and blackened crest,

And great Achilles crumbling on his pyre.
Then comes Ulysses sighing for his home
Afar, leaving the ruins of old Troy
For Ithaca, where oft, a glad-faced boy,
He played amid the ripening vines, and heard
His father's voice ere he began to roam
The weary waves. His heart is stirred
With thoughts of home, and son, and wife,
And ever Circe holds him in her arms.
How have I longed to drift on some far isle,
Like thee, from feverish alarms,
And voices of reproach, and earth's vain strife—
Some urnless land beyond the wile
Of grief and gold, where man can quite forget
All pain, and sleep and dream not of regret.

Pale faces of the dead are with me night
And day, dear faces that were loved and lost,
And memories of sad days and bitter blight
That withered them like flowers beneath the frost.
Dead voices with their sweetness robbed by curse
Of Fate and hideous darkness worse

Than Death, white faces look across the waves,
The grey hairs come so fast, the eyes grow dim.
Why fear calm Death? But what may come before
I shudder at. What will the years bring me
Of truth and hope and sympathy?
Kind words are truest poetry
And sweetest music. Spare them not,
Life soon is o'er,
Their music cannot reach our graves

What is this life? Is man
A pebble cast upon the shore,
Then swept seaward for evermore?
Can he look back and laugh at what is past,
Give himself up to pleasure, and rejoice
In dissolution when his footprints last
A day upon the strand? Gaze on
The sea and feel thy littleness:
Think of dead men, and feel
Thy power while golden thought doth steal
Into thine heart, to charm and bless,
And poems sweeter than sound of vesper bell,

When dream-eyed Night ascends her silvery throne !
Is life eternal ebb ?

Is man an alien and his work a web
Of gossamer ? Ah, see that soul
Divine in Athens quaff the bowl
Of hemlock like some nectar-drinking god,
Full of immortal dreams, and say 'tis well
Cold ashes fill the urn.

Thus may Time teach me resignation sweet
And faith, so that I may return
This body to the lifeless clod
From which it came, and meet
The vanished millions. God will keep His own.
Sadly I wait and hear thine elegy
For all the world, O melancholy sea !

TO A WINTER BIRD.

A STARRY sheen now fills the bloomless earth,
Summer hath gone, and gone the delicate rose
With perfumed petals sunk in deepening snows,
Faded and dumb the emerald fields of mirth,
Where the wild warbler used to tune his pipe, at birth
Of Spring, with glad melodious song,
Sporting amid an airy throng
Of tangled boughs and drooping bowers of leaves.
Empty is every silken nest,
Where grew the tender brood, caressed
'Mid sun-warm trees whose mingled shadow weaves
Cool haunts, languid with ease and dreamful rest.
How throbs the heart at gay approach of Spring,
When Beauty plays upon the silver grass,
Or gazes in the rippling pools of glass,

Lulled with sweet song, and lilies pale that swing
On slender stalks. In her luxuriant tresses cling
Violet and moss and bleeding-heart,
Gently she sleeps, with lips apart,
On blossom beds, her scented bosom heaves ;
Glad with the thought of future boon,
She dreams beneath the curvèd moon,—
Dreameth of harvest with its yellow sheaves,
And fruit on rosy branches strewn.
Ah, soon forgotten Spring when Summer glows,
And the wild bee hangs round the blossoming lime
Long after sunset flush, and cheateth time
Of rest, ere, humming, he reluctant goes
Through shadowy scented fields where juicy clover grows
Mid barley, wheat, and fluttering peas,
Whose bloom doth promise large increase
Of bearded ear, plump seed, and bending pod.
Along the fence wild bushes fling
Dew-laden berries, locusts sing ;
The daisy, buttercup, and wild rose nod.
Brief bloom the days of Summer bring.
Soon, soon the Summer wanes in Autumn's sheen,

When sumachs hang rich plumes along the hill,
And glossy groups of crows untiring fill
The woods and stubble-fields ; reddening is seen
The hawthorn tree. Along the road, the glad birds gle
Light thistledown in darting flight ;
Wild golden bloom throbs with delight,
By hill and winding vale and bubbling stream
Bright butterflies a-hovering stray,
On silken wings, in lazy play ;
And clustering fruits, in glossy ripeness, gleam
On mountain ash, and alder spray.
'Neath bursting apples orchard trees hang red,
With luscious peckings to the mealy core,
And gardens yield large plums. About the door
The purple vine, on bending trellis spread ;
Far in the woods the deep-tinged trees melodious shed
Their mellow leaves, and scatter o'er
The ground brown nuts in ample store ;
The sportive squirrel, chattering with glee,
O'erjoyed with food for winter days,
'Neath logs and fallen leaves he lays
Them one by one so secretly,

hill, While hills and woods are dim with haze.
What wonder that the yearning heart is sad
s seen When Winter comes and Autumn days are dead,
ad birds gle When song and bloom and gladdening days are fled !
Where are the joyous scenes that Summer had ?
And where the bright-winged birds that singing were so
glad ?
They sought the radiant South long, long
Ago, for warmer haunts of song ;
eam But thou, swift-wingèd bird of snows and winds,
Thou tender messenger of love
ed, Comest like Noah's wandering dove
With Olive branch of hope to weary minds
e door When all is gloom below, above !
Thou hast not known Spring on the hill's green side ;
odious shed The Summer sunshine, shade, and crystal streams,
and misty Autumn's melancholy dreams ;
Nor seen them fade, nor asked, " Can aught abide ?"
Nor wept sad tears for loves that with them sighing died.
I know not what the future hath—
Narrow or heavy-tangled path,
Failure and grief and death must be my lot ;

Yet hidden power that dwells in thee
Will surely lead me tenderly,
More than the south-born bird thy life hath taught
Me hope and love's infinity.

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AT SEA.

UPON the shore stood friends,
Who gazed upon the barque and little crew
Till all had faded in the golden west,
And darkness settled on the lonely sea.
Then whispered they, with voices low and sad,
"Will they return to vine-clad Spain, their home,
Or perish in some far-off clime alone?"
Far o'er the sea the little vessel passed
Till all grew tired of the moaning waves,
And at the dismal creaking of the masts,
The hollow beating of the sails; they turned
Their longing eyes far o'er the restless sea,
And thought of home, and friends, and vine-clad Spain.
In dreams the tender voice of Philomel
Their souls did soothe, and wandered 'neath the moon,
With love-lit eyes, fair maids, whose silvery laugh
Stole o'er the slumbering sense like music sweet.

MORN.

AURORA fair

From love's soft couch in beauty rises up
With Tithon's kisses blushing sweet, and o'er
The restless sea stole silver smiles. . . .

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FAME.

ALL Pleasure's paths are far from glory's gate,
And many at the threshold fall away
And are forgot ; the wearer of the wreath
Must watch and wait—most weary is the way
Ere rests the head upon the lap of Fame.

HOME.

OUR home—ah, tender thought !—the happy scene
Of childhood days ; the holy land where sleep
Our dearest loves, who toiled and wept and prayed
For us they held enshrined within their hearts !
How clings the soul to old familiar spots !
How sad the stranger's lot, to roam alone,
Far from his childhood home and native land !

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CORYDON AND AMARYLLIS.

WINTER hath fled ; gone are the glistening robes
Of starry sheen, gone are the wandering winds
That moaned amid the lofty pines. Spring greets
Again her sylvan vales ; her gladsome face
And sunshine smiles illumine the fields and woods
With flowers and song. The merry birds have come
Again from their long roaming 'mid the bloom
And perfumed boughs of far-off golden climes.
As for a while they miss their sunny haunts
And well-loved silken nests, so have I longed
For thee, sweet Amaryllis, since thou art
Far from these fields. Sad thoughts haunt evermore
My restless youth ; for thou and Corydon
And I were wont to wander in the woods
And cull the dew-crowned flowers that earliest bud.

The spring is here, the winter days have fled ;
The snow, that wove in star-set drapery
Pale beauty on the trees, hath vanished 'neath
The wealth of sun ; plump sparrows fill the eaves
With joy. How pleasant 'tis to feel the breeze,
And the vast fields of sunshine deep and wide,
Quickening the music of the tired heart—
To drink the wild intoxicating draughts
Of scented air, and hear the joyous rains !
How welcome are the sun-bathed beds of grass,
Green splendour of new buds upon the lawns,
The fluttering leaf and flower and bird at eve
And at melodious dawn ! How the heart throbs
With joy to look away from life's stern toil,
To view such beauty bursting from the earth,
And take fresh hope at sight of orchard rows
In bloom ! Sweet days, O gladsome, gladsome days !
When we were wont to dwell by silver waves
Where spray-rimmed ripples break, and see the sun
Fade into gold ; when, by some wavy hill
Or placid vale beneath melodious trees,
We watched the white repose of clouds, and heard

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The streamlet's merry wave, and sportive groups
Of children merry-eyed upon the grass !
Oft have we gazed on purple violet beds,
And sweet it was to hear thy gladdening voice,
And see thy magic beauty bend, as buds
Of purest bloom, beneath the fondling breeze,
Culling the peeping buds with eager hands,
Hands fairer than pale lily leaves. How dear
The task to Corydon and me, to wreath
Each silken tress with blushing flowers that seemed
Fairer on thee than on their grassy banks ;
While noisy crows were calling from the trees,
And far within the leaves the wood-bird sought
His merry meal ! But never more for thee,
No more the purple wreaths our fond hands twined
So oft. Dumb are thy tender lips, whence fell
The precious words my tongue first learned to lisp
And love amid the sympathetic dawn
Of waking mind, when swells th' unfolding bud
Of thought's immortal flower. Listless the hands
That led me through the flowery ways of youth,
Instilling thoughts of purity and love

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That live for ever ; faded the arms that held
Me to thy faithful breast, where Nature fair
Findeth her deepest love. And wilt thou ne'er
Return to me, sweet Amaryllis, mine
No more ? The wild bee leaves his empty cell
And gladly quaffs his brimming cups of bloom,
Humming the honied hours to rest, and now
The grey-bird pipes his song and sweet-winged choir
That never tire by wood and leafy lane.
The meadows blaze with myriad twinkling stars ;
'Mid yellow dandelions nimbly trip
The bleating lambs, beside the quiet ewes,
O'er sunny lawns. Aloft the swallows fly,
Twittering in joyous groups o'er orchard trees
That rain upon the ground sweet pink-white flakes
Among the clustering lilac bells doth stray
The humming-bird ; the whitening hawthorn dons
Pale perfumed robes. Will not the voice of Spring
These cheerful signs of life, and fragrant winds
That wander through the drooping willows win
Thee back to glowing life again ?

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O robin, with the mellow flute so full
Of melody, 'twas almost to forget
That this fair world of ours could know one pang
Or tear, it was so beautiful, so full
Of joy. How my young heart did wildly bound
With thee in warbling greenness of glad Spring !
My youth hath been attuned to thy sweet song ;
We have together roamed by mossy streams
Whose gladness mingled with our own, through fields
Where buds and berries ripened into bloom,
And by the leafy greenness of cool woods.
Our lives were like a merry dream, serene
And shadowless ; passion and apathy
Were far away, when thou wert breathing forth
Thine ecstasy. With thee I drove the kine
Homeward along the lane, whose winding way
Left far behind the tangled trees and gloom—
That daisied lane, how like the tender thought
Of early home ! Then did the brown-armed maids
Come tripping with their ample pails, calling
The kine with simple names, until they drowsed
In girlish laughter and low sweet-lipped rifts

Of song. In happy rivalry we stood,
With eager eyes, and linked our childish dreams
Unto the first-born star. The moonlight brought
Dim fairy tales and June's rose-heavy wreaths
By fragrant doors and lingering good-nights.
Thy merry song was wont to wake the morn
To eager-footed play and careless joy ;
But Time hath brought a spiritual change,
The light of sadder thought. Now, when I leave
The dream-paved palaces of sleep, thou art
A Dorian flute of wordless grief and pain,
A feathered memory of the vanished years.
One night I could not sleep, but knelt beside
The window sill. The red sun rose behind
The hedge ; thy song became an elegy
Of dying love. O God, how little do
We cling to what we have, how much to dreams !

Pale Melancholy, faithfully thou lov'st
The human soul when youth and passion fail,
How precious all things grow beneath thy smile !
Sad sister of the poet's lonely hours,

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Thy clinging arms embrace us all, thy feet
Are in all paths, and Nature saddens 'neath
Thine eyes. The lotus and the poppy have
Thee in their dreamy veins, thine image dwells
For ever in the jewelled wine ; thou art
The hungry beauty of Love's crescent eyes,
The tremour of white hands, the ashy gleam
Of noble brows, and thou dost startle Love's
Young dream into a dying swoon and strew
A flowery sadness on some new-made grave.
How soon thou com'st !

Ill-fated day that saw

Dear Corydon depart to feed his flocks !
Turning, he said, "Sweet Amaryllis, soon
I shall return to thee ; soon sinks the sun,
Soon doth the day draw on the starry night."
Thus did he speak, waving his parting hand,
And led his bleating flocks away, winding
His rustic pipe. In dreams her eyes recalled
The beauty of his form, his matchless strength,
And noble step. Alas ! ere Phœbus sank,
Ere the white stars came out, the shepherds found

Thee, Corydon, amid the silly sheep,
Where thou hadst fallen in the pleasant fields,
Fallen to rise no more ; for Death's cold dews
Had dampened thy pale brow ere breath of Time
Had dimmed thy lovely eyes, or shed upon
Thy noble locks, unchanged by feeble age,
The silver blossoms of mortality.

The sorrowing shepherds bore him home ; and when
She saw his lifeless form, moaning, she wept,
And clung to his cold hand, kissed his pale cheek,
Clasping him to her throbbing breast, she spake
Life's saddest words, mingled with many a sigh.

“O Corydon, awake, awake ! He is
Not dead, ye weeping ones, but sleeps. Awake !
Hast thou forgot our happy childhood days,
When hand in hand we strayed along the woods,
Along the winding streams, dreaming sweet dreams
Of love, dreaming the future nevermore,
And in our dreams no thought of heartless death ?
Now art thou fallen like the leaf that blooms
No more, gone like the wind-torn withered rose,

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Or like the bird that seeks the summer South,
Nor comes again. Before thy shrine of love
I laid the incense of a passionate youth,
Joyful with thee I left my earliest love.
Lonely, ah me ! how lonely life's last look !
Lonely sad death ! lonely the gloomy grave !
The Fates, dear Corydon, have cut the cord,
And Charon caught thee in his chilly arms,
Dipping the sunless oar in Death's black stream :
Torn from the beauteous earth, its bloomy haunts,
The sunlit cloud, the sheen of moon and star,
And thine unfinished work and fruitless toil !
For ever here, with thee, my love, could I
Have lived amid these joys that Nature gives
So freely in these pleasant fields, wreathèd
With flame of flower and fruit on emerald boughs.
Methought our lives had just begun, and all
Our married years were like the years of youth,
Dim and forgotten in sweet future hopes.
Now must I dwell lone and disconsolate.
Thee, Corydon, the boat among the reeds,
The rippling waves tinged with the waning sun,

Thy footprints fading from the sandy shore,
Recall, and love, the freshening dew of life,
Is lost to me for evermore."

She ceased

Her plaint ; in mournful arms the shepherds bore
Him tenderly unto the silent rest
Of grassy graves, heaping the sounding clods
High o'er his dreamless head. Unhappy day
For thee, sweet Amaryllis, when, grieving,
Thou didst return, and in old haunts didst miss
His face, when all the shepherds led their flocks
Afield, but Corydon, dear Corydon,
No more, the fairest, noblest one ; thy heart
Grew weary of its woe, thine eye of all
These lovely scenes. Oft lingering, thou didst shed
Sad tears above his new-made grave, breathing
The weary sigh. Then did I try to win
Her from her grief.

"Sweet Amaryllis, rail
No more at Death. Death is the laying down
Of care, long rest from toil, last sleep.
A thing of sadness is man's life, tinged with

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A little gleam of joy. Its pleasant dreams
Are few ; the rest are full of trouble, change,
Ambition, passion, care that frets the brow.
There is no greatness in the grave, for there
Injustice hath no rule, and soon are o'er
The pomps and honours of frail life, and dumb
The clamour of the gilded car, the shout
Of mighty triumph, Glory's siren voice.
There come no haunting visions of the lost,
What might have been, what is, what never more
Can be ; no tears of cruel destiny,
Nor Youth's illusive dreams. There none command
And none obey. Proud kings lay down their crowns ;
The soldier goes not to the weary war ;
Soon doth the poet lay aside his well
Belovèd pipe, leaving the haunts of song.
Think not calm Death ignoble end to Life,
Nor what the sightless mind hath feared beyond
The grave. Fear not to lay the body down
In lonely peace ; man's mould, his wondering eyes,
His brow thought-pale, are only transient clay,
And useless as the fallen leaf when Life's

Brief work is done. Then let them fall to dust,
This restless heart that throbs with love and hate
And pride and feverish pang ; for it is well.
Worms do dissolve Nature's most noble work
In one brief hour ; the little worm we tread
Upon in life hath power to change what we
Have loved so well into a little dust.
There is some tender purpose far beyond
Our little vision, sadness and regret."

But, heeding not my words, she roamed about
The paths bright with the fading Autumn leaf,
And Corydon was in her heart alway,
And on her lips. The sobbing of the rain,
The Winter with its wandering winds bemoaned
His timeless fate. No season brought her hope ;
But day by day her way grew darker, wearier,
Relief was but the madness of a dream.
She wandered through the house in lonely grief,
From room to room in longing sad and wild,
In her large eyes the vision of dead joy,
In her grieved heart the treasured word and smile,

And o'er her face the shadows of despair.
Sorrow lay heavy on her heart when she
Did sleep, sorrow lay heavy on her heart
When she did wake, for every dream was his,
And every waking thought. And oft she said,
"How sorrow's whirlwind sweeps into our lives
And leaves them like the barren sand ! My sun
Hath set, and all life's flowers are withered up.
Ye gods, why do we live, why do we die ?"
There came a languid light into her eyes,
A sad change o'er her hair and fading face ;
She dwelt with us, yet seemed in other worlds,
Until she faded as the violet fades.
Beside the lilac trees, ere leaf or bloom
Came out, we laid her in her silent bed,
Asleep with Corydon for evermore.
But yesterday we watched the silly sheep,
Together in the summer shade, and heard
The plashing of the kine in the cool stream,
Whose silver currents foam in saffron glee
Among the moss-wet trees that dream in green
Forgetfulness. There, in calm roseate morn,

We heard the mower whet his gleaming scythe,
And its low sweep among the clover-blooms,
Whilst the brown boy raked it in scented heaps.
There many an amber bee shared our repose,
And all day long our thoughts were sweeter than
His heavy wings. All day the fleecy clouds
Brooded afar upon the purple hills,
Until the sun went down the magic west.
Then homeward did we turn through grassy paths,
Lulled with the sound of many an even-song.

The harvest days golden the fields again ;
Here do I lie upon the summer grass
Among the quiet graves, and hear the wind
Among the corn, the sweet and wild refrain
Of wave and song and wing. O restless thought !
Insatiate spirit that doth lead the mind
From youth's calm trust unto that boundless deep,
Dark Ocean, whose mysterious music swells
For ever on the soul, and whoso hears
Dwells a pale alien in forsaken ways,
Caught in a labyrinth of gloomy dreams !

The harvest fields are beautiful, and yet
Upon them there doth seem to dwell sadness
Unspeakable and silent thought of Death.
O Death! the golden and the silver haired
Are thine—the murmur of unnumbered lips,
The splendour of unnumbered eyes, the wrecks
Of time, and all that yet must be—kings, priests,
Empires, high palaces and gilded fanes,
Youth, age, hopes, fears, wild passions, lusts, despair,
And all the various things that make life such
Enchanted doom. Those strong desires that haunt
Our nights and days, the promise of green youth
Warm with the passion of sweet love and fame,
And that wan yearning for what cannot be,
Soon sleep in dawnless rest of marble urns
Stained with neglect. It is so strange to sleep
And wake, to love and weep, and ask, “Is life
A dream?” and sleep again; for Life is sad
As Death, and Death sadder than Life, and rest
Is not for those who live, but for the grave.
For e’en the gods have grief; sorrow doth dwell
Far in the urnless regions of the gods

Who live immortal in the realms of ease,
Forgetful of their slaves, where iron fate
Yields not to prayer nor sighs. There Phœbus wept
O'er well-loved Hyacinthus' purple face,
And Ceres mourned for Proserpine, culled like
A lustrous flower, and Cynthia saddened o'er
The first gray hair upon Endymion's brow.
The gods have sorrow, what can we expect—
Mortals, blind dwellers in an unknown land,
Whose being and whose names are born of Fate?
We rise from nothingness to hopeful life,
And pass into forgetfulness and gloom,
Drifting about like aimless clouds that fade
In golden flight, to fall from whence we came.
Here, in the glamour of a thoughtless world,
We cling to precious hope, striving to fling
From out the heart grim doubt, that says we are
Weak bubbles on a sea of change, alone
In the wild flow of an eternal tide,
Where love and joy and pain and woe become
The heritage of others, who arise
To do the work that we have left undone.

Our fathers pass from us, wrinkled and wan ;
Our children fade and die about our knees ;
Our wives, whose gentle hands for ever ply
Some loving task, grow sadder year by year,
Mourning deserted homes, where Innocence
Was wont to sport in unsuspecting glee ;
Where unforgotten faces linger still,
Whose names are writ on Memory's silent scroll,
So powerless to wake responsive life,
So vain to break their melancholy sleep.
What wonder that the heart in sadness asks,
" Why are we born to taste the joys of life,
Breathe one sweet breath, see such enchanting sights,
To wake from youth and hear a little while
The melody of love, building the form
Divine, building the thought sublime, building
The generous heart, to perish in an hour ? "
But that eternal cry hath no response,
And ne'er can have, the while we sit in earth's
Deep shades, trying to read in waning light
Of years the various solemn thoughts that fill
The soiled pages of Life's closing book,

Vexed with the babble of confusing tongues.
Life is a precious book whose pages are
The years, whose thoughts the deeds that speak the heart
A little book hid on the dusty shelf
Of Time, where some young wanderer may come
And read into his life, its silent thoughts,
To bless or curse the memory of *†* lead.
A little, little book!—and oftentimes
The fairest bound contains the meanest thought.
Yet naught can perish in this world of change ;
Forgetfulness is not our doom, though forms
May perish outwardly. All things abide
For ever in the changeless mind, and like
The dew upon the sleeping rose, and like
The winds that bear a thousand flowers to deck
The coming year, unseen we live again
In other hearts ; our bodies have an end,
Our thoughts and memories are infinite.
Yon gleaners in the yellow fields of grain,
Unlearned, whom Fortune binds to simple tasks,
Plying their sickles through the summer day,
What thoughts have they among the ripened sheaves,

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From flush of dawn until the moon's first beam ?
Their work is humble, and their joys, their hopes,
Their fears, their cares, are free from pride and scorn.
The children chase the butterflies of youth ;
The guileless swain rests his brown hand to dream
On some wild flower pure as an infant's smile,
Breathing a sacred love into his life
To feed the years long after she hath ceased
To flush at his kind words and tremble 'neath
His ardent eyes. But in the older lives
Are other thoughts ; for slowly they have seen
Life's landscape, set with Beauty's various hues
And fresh delight, fade 'neath their wistful gaze,
And all its greenness wither into gold,
While other vistas rise mysterious
And dim in lonely Contemplation's eye.
Their speech grows less ; for silently do they
Commune with Nature's heart. Yon bell that haunts
The old church tower doth bring forgotten days—
When they were wed, the ring, the vows that brought
Long happiness and consecrated love.
So many lives have come and gone from them,

Learning from Time a sad philosophy.
Each Sabbath finds them in the little church,
Where, bending low the aged head, they seek
To learn the high heroic faith that rose
In Jacob's dream, to suffer and to die.
They know not admiration nor loud fame,
But artless love and duty's call obeyed.
Hear, by their grassy graves, the poetry
They read in life, "Will not the Judge of all
The earth do right?" and Resignation's voice
Upon the crumbling stones, "Thy will be done."

The western sun hath faded to a star
Upon the mountain's peak, and far and dim
The fields beneath the gathering mists of night ;
And calm the summer moon and silver eve
Above the ripened fields, and Hesper bright
Appears, leaving his sapphire couch on high,
While lowing kine creep through the tinkling vales,
And sweetly rise thoughts of the golden sheaf,
Thoughts of the harvest-song and blushing vine ;
But not for ye two lowly ones. Soon comes

Fair Autumn's fluttering hair and blooming cheeks
O'er grasses tangled with large mellow fruit.
Sleep on, sleep on, dear ones ; if I could wind
An Orphean lute I would not wake ye from
Your dreamless bed. Sleep, sleep ! Yet must I live
Alone. Forgetting is a weary task,
And human sorrow fills the poet's dream
With laurel tears. Since ye are gone, life is
A throbbing of the heart, a tired breath,
A waking from a troubled sleep,
A dreaming and a passing unto death,
A mist of memories and a dreamless urn.

EVERMORE.

COME, love—for there is nothing in this world
As sweet as love—come, then, and be my bride,
And we shall make our pleasant home among
The woods and dells, among the flowers and streams,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

We'll gaze into the violet eyes of Spring,
That ope and close upon green dewy banks,
Where hyacinths are twined in purple mists,
Our dreamy sighs will fill melodious days,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

And when the wild rose wakes the jealous morn,
Wild birds will tune again their throats to song,
The golden bee reseek sweet golden bells
And chime the drowsy summer hours to sleep,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

And when their vesper hymns have died in bloom
Of tear-stained flower, and when the sun doth leave
His fading footprints in the glowing clouds,
Thou'lt be the queen of my divinest dreams,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

And ah ! when moon-eyed Night doth rise and cull
Her silver flowers upon the sapphire fields
Of trembling bloom, from these eternal flowers
We'll catch the perfume of life's sweetest thought,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

Beside the foam-fringed border of the sea
We'll learn how great and little is the world,
Forget the follies we've been taught, and feel
That life and love are true, whate'er be false,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

When Spring is gone and yellow Autumn comes,
When Youth's wild love and short-lived passion die,
My heart will ne'er prove false to thee ; by this
High love that doth disdain all mean desire,
I swear to love thee, love thee evermore.

Not for those low-lit eyes divine that fill
My every dream ; not for those cheeks that shame
The loveliest flower ; but for the thoughts thy life
Will yet unfold within the future years—
For these I'll love thee, love thee evermore.

And in the sadness of forsaken life,
When greenest hopes have withered into tears,
Though we may find the past and present hour
The priceless setting of a little dream,
Yet will I love thee, love thee evermore.

To suffer pain with thee were sweet as joy
With others ; all delights and fatal pangs
That come into this transient life of ours
Will closer wreathe our love in greener links,
And I will love thee, love thee evermore.

When silver light doth dawn upon the head,
And in wan age we watch each other die,
When true-love lips have mouldered into dust,
And hearts can speak no more, write on my grave
That I will love thee, love thee evermore.

A SLEEPING NEWS-GIRL.

SWEET maid, thy sleep is calm and fair ;

The beauty of thy face

Doth fix mine eyes in mad despair

Upon each simple grace.

Thou art so young, thou art so frail ;

Cold Poverty hath made thee pale,

And left thee here alone ;

Thy drooping head hath tearful power

O'er me, wild, melancholy flower,

Neglected as a stone.

Here do I linger by thy side,

Forgetful of the roar

Swelling from out the human tide

That flows for evermore.

Thou art unconscious of their strife,
As they are of thy helpless life
And utter loneliness.
And O, if thou shouldst fade and die,
Thy pallid face and pleading eye
The world would never miss.

The papers fall from thy weak arm,
And tangled is thine hair ;
Thou art away from all alarm
And life-consuming care.
Nations and kings may fall and rise,
Despite the soldier and the wise,
And man be bond or free ;
Statesmen may wane and set or shine,
Great art may prosper or decline—
It matters not to thee.

Thine is no life of flower and bird,
And joys the seasons bring ;
By vale and hill thou hast not heard
The bleating lambs of Spring.

Thou hast not seen green harvest shoot,
Nor heard the streamlet's merry flute,
 Nor plucked one lily white
From the clear tide, nor hast thine eye
Found in its waves the sapphire sky
 And vigil stars of night.

For thee there is no tender voice
 To soothe thy lonely heart,
To make thy hungry soul rejoice
 And into rapture start ;
No arm to clasp thy shrinking form,
To shield thee from the cruel storm,
 Nor sympathetic breast.
Thou art deprived of childhood's joys,
The glee of happier girls and boys,
 And home's deep love and rest.

Thou sleep'st ! 'Tis well that thou canst sleep,
 That there is some relief,
That thou canst from the shadows creep
 Unto a pleasure brief.

Thou dream'st thou dost no longer roam ;
Thy feet are in a pleasant home,
Free from *all* scorn and curse.
All that thy yearning eyes have seen
Is thine, for now thou art a queen
In a rich universe.

Sleep on, sleep on in silent bliss,
Too soon wilt thou awake ;
Too soon these pleasant visions miss,
Sleep's golden clime forsake.
Thy dreams must vanish into air ;
Thou'lt fix again a glassy stare
On melancholy sights.
As vain and empty as thy dream
Unto the thoughtful mind doth seem
Man's conquests and delights.

Time will not leave thee as thou art
Always, for thou must change ;
These scenes must vanish from thine heart,
And visions yet more strange.

Passion may claim thee as his slave,
Neglect may bring an early grave,
Yet in thy saddest tears,
As others ask in lonely pain
And gloom, thou wilt not ask again
The life of earlier years.

If love had power to change thy state,
And with one touch could stay
Thy throbbing life, this cruel fate
Should swiftly pass away.
Those violet veins should cease to flow,
The breathing of that breast of snow
Should be for ever still ;
The splendour of thy trembling eye,
Thy modest smile, and weary sigh,
Should turn to marble chill.

Adieu, adieu, unconscious maid ;
Into the world I go.
'Tis sad to think we give no aid
And little do we know.

We know not why each life is born
To be a flower or a thorn,
Nor can Philosophy
Explain why thou art cast a weed
Upon this troubled shore, nor creed
Unfold thy destiny.

TO A BLIND SINGER.

How sad thy song, thou wanderer pale
About the city's restless stones !
Thy song is for a little bread
To feed a withering life.

Thy form is bent, and thou art blind—
There is no other work for thee ;
Thou canst but roam from door to door,
And sing thy pleading song.

Thou hast no dreams, for long since they
Are gone—gone like thy transient youth.
Ambition is no more ; thou hast
Naught but desire to live.

And what a life ! For ever shut
From light and beauty's various ways,
Condemned to dwell in lonely thought
And black monotony.

The weary stones beneath thy feet
Alone give answer to thy voice,
Save when some generous maiden lays
A penny in thine hand.

Thou canst not see her gentle eyes,
Aglow with love and tenderness ;
Thou canst but pray that Time may prove
Kinder to her than thee.

Not as the lark thou sing'st, so wild
And free, far in his sunny home ;
His gladness bursts from sapphire skies,
Over the fields of gold.

There are no sad notes in his song,
Hunger and thirst are all unknown ;
His home is built with perfumed flowers
And silver gems of dew.

But thou art old, and weak, and gray ;
The garret is thy cheerless home,
Where thou dost long to leave thy woe
In an oblivious sleep.

Not as a maid in glowing youth,
Lost in a lovely world of dreams,
Whose life doth seem a paradise
Lit with love's ardent eyes.

Thou canst not sing as others sing,
The years have taught thee different strains ;
Thy visionary youth is gone,
And hopeless age is thine.

And yet, what more can any boast
Than this poor ragged beggar hath ?
We are as blind, and sorrow is
The burden of our song.

HOPE.

In shadowy calm the boat
Sleeps by the dreaming oar ;
The green hills are afloat
Beside the silver shore.

Youth hoists the white-winged sail,
Love takes the longing oar—
The oft-told fairy tale
Beside the silver shore.

Soft lip to lip, and heart
To heart, and hand to hand,
And wistful eyes, depart
Unto another strand.

And lovely as a star
They tremble o'er the wave,
With eager wings afar,
Unto the joys they crave.

In a sweet trance they fare
Unto the wind and rain,
With wind-tossed waves of hair,
And ne'er return again.

And at the drifting side,
Changed faces in the deep
They see, and changing tide,
Like phantoms in a sleep.

Slow hands furl the torn sail
Without one silver gleam,
And, sad and wan and pale,
They gaze into a dream.

THE LAST SLEEP.

My love, the dawn is flushing thy cheek,
And the sunlight creeps high ;
I have watched thee all night, till the first faint streak
Of dim light in the sky.

Thou hast lain so quiet, my love, not a word,
I have watched so long,
And bird hath begun to answer bird
In gladness of song.

Slowly the moon and the stars have burned low
In the dawn of the day ;
My love, my love, awake ! let us go
To the fields that are gay.

The trees are dreaming, their shadows float
By the musical shores ;
The white swan is paddling his feather-sailed boat
With lazy oars.

The fields are with emerald memories strewed
Where our first love grew,
And the golden-haired flowers are awake in the wood,
Bathing in scented dew.

All night I have heard the ringing of bells—
One was so wild and glad ;
All night I have heard the ringing of bells—
One so solemn and sad.

I have missed the ivy of hands on my neck,
Dove-white face on my breast ;
I have madly longed to see thee awake
From thy quiet rest.

O the kindly light of thine eyes in the morn,
Smiling up at my own !
O thy joyful voice to the heart forlorn,
With its love-laden tone !

O the wild-rose blush 'neath the trailing tress,
Hung freshly on thee,
When thy lips in tremors of love did confess
Thou wert dreaming of me.

The streamlet sings to his flowery throng,
Where the green stones lie ;
The grasses and leaves have waited so long,
Then come ere they die.

Though thou couldst not come, sadly I went
Alone on the lea ;
I culled these flowers thou didst love, all bent
In sorrow for thee.

No joy nor gloom can ever wean
Thy pallid brow
From my heart. Thank God, how true thou hast been !
I have kept my vow.

THE PAINTER TO HIS PICTURE.

How I did hang upon that face
When but a dreaming boy !
How bright the golden clusters of thine hair !
My studio seemed a weary place
When thou didst go ; and joy
Returned in thinking of thy face so fair.

I painted thee, and day by day,
Beneath the amorous brush,
I saw thee grow upon the canvas bare ;
I strove to catch thy smile's sweet play, .
And fix the faintest blush
Upon that pearly cheek with idle care.

Those lips where red-ripe kisses hung
Like dew-wet fruit ! that brow
With veins as sweet as wine in purple bowl !
As on thy lily freshness hung
Mine eyes, O, sure and slow,
Love painted the same image on my soul !

O sweet, sweet ever-budding eyes,
Fringed with pale-petalled lids,
With tints of purest colour interwove,
Whose sacred beauty doth despise
Mean thought, whose light forbids
All trifling looks except the gaze of love !

How lovely that curved neck doth fade
Amid those fluttering breasts !
How fine those arms, the coral bloom of hands,
Those rounded limbs so amply made !
What wondrous beauty rests
With thee, as of the wave of fairy wands !

Ah me ! I almost had forgot
Myself in memory,
That thou art but a shadow on the wall,
A painted speechless face, and not
My living love ! I see
In thee the vanished years beyond recall.

Dear love, why did they part us two ?
We loved each other well.
My heart did ever beat unto thy love !
Our love was young and strong and true.
Why did they break the spell,
And leave the pain the years cannot remove ?

The glow of wealth and tinselled pride
Laughed my young life to scorn ;
Remorseless hearts that yield to mean disdain
Did tear thee from my helpless side,
Leaving the lowly born
To nurse the passion of a maddened brain.

I cannot speak the pain I feel
In every lonely hour,
And many a one hath come, so grimly slow.
Into mine eyes thy warm eyes steal,
In deeper, sadder power
Than when I loved thee in the long ago.

I did not hear the glad bells ring,
Nor swear to be thine own,
Where music through the crowded aisle did thrill ;
I did not give the kiss, the ring ;
Yet am I here alone
With the old love, and thinking of thee still.

How often I have longed to hear
Thy voice break my regret,
Thy footstep start my saddest reverie ;
To see thy beauty lingering near
My side, in it forget
The heartache and the mind's deep agony !

How sweet beneath thine eyes' deep glow,
With beat of palm in palm
And clinging arm and fluttering breast, to lie,
To kiss thy veins into wild flow
Of thine heart's purple balm,
With unshut eyes to fall asleep and die !

Thou only canst return in gleam
Of sleep-deluded mind,
When all the transient past doth rise before
The wistful eye in broken dream,
From which I wake and find
Thy shadow gazing on me evermore.

See, love, my hair is growing gray ;
Those locks of thine are fair
As when my fingers wove that amber curl
Upon thy neck in glittering spray.
Thou hast defied all care,
Crowned with th' eternal smile of a sweet girl.

And though thy breast hath never stirred,
Yet canst thou never sigh ;
Though thy still lips are closed in endless bloom,
They cannot speak one mournful word,
Nor in that azure eye
Can dwell one tear that speaks the spirit's gloom.

THE POET.

THE poet hath a golden reed,
The poet hath a laurel meed.
When first, poet, wert thou born?
In the glow of dewy morn,
When pearls tremble on the trees,
When awakes the scented breeze?
Or in calm of starry eve,
When wild bees sweet flowers leave,
When white Luna coyly peeps,
And pale Melancholy weeps?
Was thy cradle-bed of flowers,
And thy nurses dream-clad hours?
Thee, O poet, gods have given
To be uncrowned king of earth,
Herald of true love and worth,

Herald of great Nature's praise,
Seeker out of Beauty's ways,
Sipping poppies' charmèd wine,
Sunk in Poesy's sleep divine.
Thee, O poet, Muses fed,
And their bosoms thy white bed.
Soft they kissed thee o'er and o'er ;
Sweet the nectar did outpour
From the cups of Helicon,
Sweet ambrosia fed thee on.
In the crystal Hippocrene
With them sporting thou hast been,
Hung on each delicious grace,
Rounded limb and flowery face,
Pearls that glisten in loose hair,
Pearls that slip down shoulders fair,
Lily hands that dash the spray
O'er thy breast in white-limbed play.
Sapphire music's silver draught,
Foamy wavelets, thou hast quaffed.
Melodious sandals, tinkling throng,
Bound haunted footsteps unto song.

Warm hands led thee from the fount,
Down steep Poesy's lofty mount ;
Laid thee lowly, tenderly,
In a vale in Thessaly,
In the poet-land of Greece,
Golden with its great increase ;
Gazed upon thee wonderingly,
Dreaming of thy minstrelsy.
In the vale they lingered late,
Left thee to thy peerless fate.
Where, O where, didst thou awake ?
By clear stream or silver lake,
Where the various tints of Spring
O'er the earth deep freshness fling,
'Midst the green buds slowly peeping
From chill Winter's leafless sleeping ?
Or by whitening hawthorn's shade,
Or by purple flowers laid
Where the wild bird wandere'h,
Where the nimble zephyr's breath
Fanneth fragrance from soft bloom,
And from Nature's swelling womb
Ever-changing glories gleam ?

Didst thou wake when roses shew
Dewy leaflets drooping low ;
When doth bloom the honeyed lime,
In the Summer's balmy prime ;
When the bearded corn is ripe,
And the peaceful songsters pipe
Until drowsy hours of ease ;
When pale Hesper tops the trees ?
Didst thou wake in Autumn's sheen,
Painting woodlands gold and green,
'Midst the quiet pathways yellow,
Blooming with rich fruitage mellow ?
Dear to thee is voice of Spring
Skimming swallows twittering,
Summer with its rose and sheaf,
Harvest songs so glad and brief ;
But the poet loveth Autumn,
With her music sad and weirdsome.
Ah ! when Autumn drapes the earth
She doth give the poet birth.
When the songster plumes his wing
For old haunts of broody Spring,

Then the poet loves to wander
To the shadowy land beyond her.
When glad Summer's glories wane,
Poet with the heart of pain,
Thy melancholy heart doth measure
This world's perishable treasure
With a dim forgetful eye ;
For when precious beauties die,
Saddening thoughts o'ersweep the brain
Like wild winds in Summer grain.
Thou hast lips and eyes divine ;
A celestial life is thine.
Passion may grow cold and pale,
Poesy's pleasures never fail.
O the poet's dream Elysian !
O the poet's magic vision !

LOVE'S DREAM.

LOVE, love, art thou dreaming of me?
I am looking and longing for thee.
Art thou near or afar?
Art thou rising, my star,
In thy youth and pure beauty,
O'er mine eyes in bright duty?

I long for thine hand in my own,
I am weary of being alone ;
I feel so weak and unworthy
Of thee—forgive the past folly !
Nor honour nor wealth can I give,
Only passionate love while I live.

Thine arms are fairer than fame,
 Thy kisses than glorious name ;
 I wait on Time's restless sands
 For the lingering clasp of thine hands ;
 Lonely and full of unrest,
 I would lay my head on thy breast.

Come, love, with thy pensive head,
 On thy yellow hair I shall thread
 My kisses of love so sacredly ;
 They'll be the beads of my rosary.
 I'll kiss thee, my love, till thou pantest for breath,
 For my love will be longer and stronger than death.

Love, love, thou wilt be my shrine,
 Not made by hands but divine,
 Priceless with gems and pearl and gold,
 That God hath cast in loveliest mould,
 I shall kneel with the gift of a life
 In tears at thy feet, O my wife !

Thy folded hands in saddest hour
 Will be my cross, and have sweet power

To bind me back to God.
I am but a helpless clod,
Warm with the thought of thine eyes so strong.
And thy voice that is tender as choral song.

Love, love, I shall cease to roam ;
Love, love, thou wilt be my home ;
Thou wilt be the ivy, and twine
Round this restless heart of mine ;
Thou wilt shield my life from the sun ;
Thou wilt cling when the summer is done.

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THE AFTER-SONG.

I CAME again to the sea,
Almost a year ago
Since I dreamed my dream of the sea.
O the wondrous ebb and flow
Of a vanishing year !
Down by the green-clad pier
I stood on the smooth-worn stones
And heard the dolorous moans
Of the waves, and their restless roar
As they panted in foam to the sandy shore.

A group of children were at play on the strand ;
With shouts of delight and laughter and dances
They sported, and fled from the sea's advances.
To my charmed sight they seemed like some fairy band

That had strayed from the caves of the sea,
Where bloom rich beds of anemone.
They were so full of joy and delight,
They seemed like a flock of fluttering dreams
That had paused for a while in their flight
To bathe in the foam of refluent streams.
A little boy and a little girl stood there
With delicate hands ;
The wind blew through soft masses of yellow hair
As they looked in the sands
For the fairest shells they could find.
What were they thinking of, there by the tawny sea ?
Not of pain, nor of care,
Nor deep passionate yearnings of mind,
As they sported in glee
By the shore of the tawny sea.

I passed farther on, and spied
A man and woman alone.
Close together they sat, side by side.
He held her hand in his own.
He was speaking low some secret word,

Which only she and the ocean heard ;
She idly tied a knot in an amber weed
That lay in her lap. Were they tying the golden knot
Of youth and its love? Were they gladly trying to read
The future unseen? Were they carving a happy lot
From the shapeless years, and a home
Full of hopes by the ocean foam,
By the ocean that flowed at their feet?
With a musical song it beat :
“ Life is so sweet and sad, so sad and sweet,
And love is the sweetest of all—
O answer it while it doth call,”
Sighed the sea at the lover's feet !

Further on sat a woman, motionless, pale,
Alone, with white face o'er the wave.
The wind went in sighs through her mourning veil.
What were her thoughts? Why did she mourn?
Her heart was sad in the world forlorn,
And clouded. Had she nursed a child
At her breast and seen it fade, with the longing wild
Of a mother's heart? Was the grave

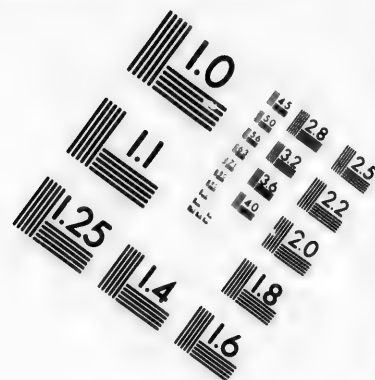
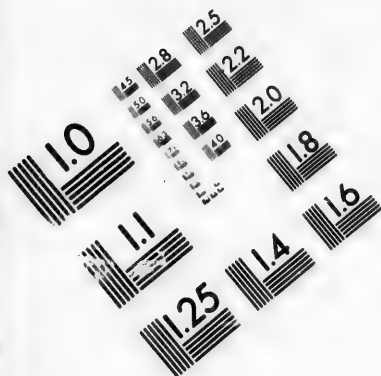
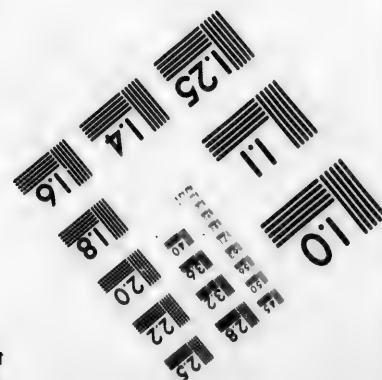
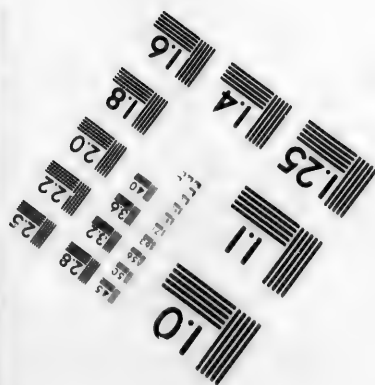
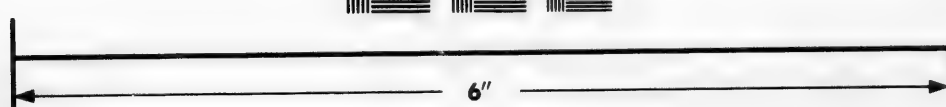
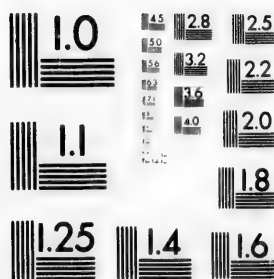


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Of some loved one green in the churchyard ?
Was she reading a new-cut name through her tears,
Or counting with sighs the sloth of the years
Since the first sad tear fell on the sward
Where dear love vanished for ever and ever ?
Did she pine for dear arms that never
Could clasp her again ? While each beryl-bowed wave
Seemed to moan in a wild refrain,
" Love cometh once, and after it pain !
Love cometh once, and never again ! "

I wandered on where an aged man
Sat alone on the rocks, withered and gray.
What visions arose to that face so wan
As the dim eyes gazed o'er the sea's wild play ?
" Wonderful changes in life's little day,"
He seemed to say ; " sad changes in Time's little span.
'Tis a swift-run road from the boy to the man,
So swift and eagerly run,
Till the light of the sun,
And the moon, and the stars, and the flowers,
And youth's green hours,

Grow precious to eyes that are dim,
Till the passions and hopes and ambitions
Of life have dwindled into a whim,
And the fair-winged dreams and visions
Are dead." And the waves of the sea
Rang in his ears, and said,
"Tis strange that life, once so full, seems vain
And empty. Life cometh once and never again,
And the wages of age is memory."

I came again and all were gone,
And I lingered there by the sea alone.
Why is the poet's pipe wed unto saddening thought?
O the unsung songs that might have been mine,
As the waves beat up in splendid rhyme.
Why beats the heart in the breast
Like the sea on the stones in unrest?
In feverish hands the foam of the waves I caught.
"Are we not more than foam in the hands of Time?"
"I said. Is there not more for life's clinging vine
Than idols and dreams, more in death than dumb sleep?"
But the waves came in with their mighty sweep

And eternal cry, "We are weary of toil and of strife,
We have toiled for ever under a spell ;
We have built the land where the nations dwell,
And the mountains that dwell with the cloud,
Both the small and the great.
What is the use? Man ever threads the maze
Of Life in the mists of fate,
While Beauty sits in desolate ways,
And Greed is the king of th' ignoble crowd,
And the world is wan with the war of creeds,
Oppression, tyranny, martyr-filled flames,
Unsatisfied love, and forgotten dead,
Fields of war where the soldier bleeds,
And pillars sculptured with deeds and names
That tell of darkness and dragon dread.
We have toiled for ever under a spell,
We have built the land where the nations dwell ;
We are weary of toil and of strife."

O wind-tossed waves that wander for evermore !
O weary waves by the winding shore !
The life that turneth no thoughtless eye

On the glories that round us lie,
On the myriad grandeurs of earth and sky,
And the wonder of changing sights,
Can feel that the lowliest worm hath rights,
And a broken shell on the beach
Hath sadness deeper than speech.



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